improved greatly during the past few years due to better technology, introduction of standards, improved after sales service. etc. A recent survey by the Consumer Coordination Council in Bangalore found that 97% of the water heaters installed during the last five years were functional.

(d) The money spent by Government helped in the development of a manufacturing base in the country, improvement in the technology and products, and building consumer confidence. The investment on a solar water heater is recovered in 3-6 years depending on the fuel substituted; that on a cooker in 3-4 years. These factors have ied to a commercialization of these products, enabling the Government to discontinue the capital subsidy on them. Subsidy on solar photovoltaic products has been retained because of the high initial cost and the utility of such products in rural areas. Even here, the subsidy on a solar lantern is recovered by the savings in subsidy on kerosene in 3-4 years.

Purchase of National Hydro Power Corporation by National Thermal Power Corporation

869. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) has decided to buy the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC); and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) and (b) The Government of India announced a Policy on Hydro Power Development in August, 1998 with an objective to accelerate the share of hydro power which has been continuously declining over the last three decades. As against an ideal hydel-thermal mix of 40:60, the share has gone down from 44% in 1970 to 25% in 1999. Due to this, the peaking deficits are high, theremal stations have to increasingly back down as they operate under base load condition and the grid works under stress. The policy has, therefore, laid emphasis on timely

completion of the on-going projects, taking up of new hydroelectric projects, survey and investigation of the new green field sites and preparation of detailed project reports.

In order to provide an impetus for accelerated hydro power development, various options are being considered to leverage the financial strength of NTPC. The NTPC has appointed M/s ICICI as a Consultant to suggest various options for leveraging the financial strength of NTPC. A decision on the modality of leveraging the financial strength of NTPC will be taken after analysing the recommendations of the consultant and after considering the views of the concerned Ministries and Planning Commission.

Conversion of Power Trading Corporation into Stock Exchange

870. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering a proposal to convert Power Trading Corporation (PTC) into stock exchange for power and the creation of wholesale and regional markets for Power; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Transmission and Distribution Losses of SEBs

871. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that almost all the SEBs have high transmission and distribution losses; and in Delhi, J&K, Orissa, losses are 50%, 40% & 46%, respectively;

(b) whether the actual figures are even higher; and